

C<sub>1</sub>

6. (Twice Amended) A process for producing hot-rolled steel strip from a continuously cast precursor strip, comprising the steps of:

receiving, at a first deformation stage having at least one roll stand, the continuous precursor strip of a complete casting sequence directly from a continuous casting plant in which the continuous precursor strip is produced;

rolling the continuous precursor strip through the first deformation stage to form a continuous intermediate strip;

coiling the continuous intermediate strip without cutting to form an intermediate coil having an intermediate coil weight comprising at least 40 tons;

uncoiling the continuous intermediate strip from the intermediate coil to supply a second deformation stage having at least one roll stand;

rolling the continuous intermediate strip through the second deformation stage to form a finished strip;

producing a plurality of finished coils from the finished strip by coiling the finished strip and severing the finished strip into sections having a desired finished coil weight after said step of rolling the continuous intermediate strip through the second deformation stage; and

changing the metallurgical characteristics of the continuous intermediate strip by changing a temperature control prior to one of said step of coiling the continuous intermediate strip and said step of rolling the continuous intermediate strip through the second deformation stage.